

EXERCISE 'BRAZEN BANDICOOT'

By Major M.C. Parsons



CPL Mick Goodwin into the jungle

It was rumoured that in the planning stages, Exercise 'Brazen Bandicoot' was to be a battalion exercise with a few 3rd Brigade units in support, including Headquarters 3rd Brigade. Naturally when the penny dropped at headquarters it soon became a brigade exercise, bigger than 'Ben Hur', with the 2nd/4th Battalion as the main player.

More disturbing however, to the lower echelons as planning and purphies developed, were the stories of a 60 kilometre advance over yams, much the same as those out the back of Lavoreck. A quick look out of the Caribou windows as we descended towards the Kangaroo Hills landing ground soon proved these latter fears completely true.

As A and B Companies quickly discovered, it was going to be a long, hot and generally uphill walk in pursuit of the enemy, elusive creatures that they were. Nevertheless, most who paused to reflect on the ever growing circus at the Kangaroo Hills fire

support base were glad to escape the commotion for the hills.

Each company, nonetheless, took it's share of activities as the exercise unfolded, including search and clearance of large slices of country, clearance of the main supply route and axis of advance, protection of the fire support base and the inevitable quick chopper ride with Ron RAAF. At one stage the traffic control duties supposedly undertaken by B company soon became more than a little hectic at the fire support base when Battalion Headquarters, 108 Battery, an engineer troop, a company resupply and A Company's choppers chose to arrive all at once. Vehicles on the chopper pad, guns trying to deploy and Ron insisting on landing on the gun-area, despite the Battery Captain throwing rocks at him made for an exciting few minutes — the CO was bemused!



"Welcome to Kangaroo Hills"



The Padre spreading the word



CAPT McGowan repairing vital sig equipment.

By the end of the first weekend after some fifty kilometres of rough country, the enemy was for the time being routed. The Battalion then concentrated at Hidden Valley for a rest and redeployment on the next phase. The concentration area sited in a spot familiar to seasoned campaigners, was hurriedly relocated from its original site when a bushfire very nearly burnt out the whole area, and 5 Platoon, who were trying to secure it.

The enemy proved more elusive, if not non-existent in the jungle. Most Companies bashed a lot of bush, though to no avail, while Recon came to grips unexpectedly with the enemy near his lair with embarrassing results. The subsequent redeployment, described by some cynics as a testing company move seen closed the net on the enemy main base.

Close reconnaissance by A and B Companies and the remainder of Recon Platoon set the scene for the final big attack. C Company's initial assault, had only 10 bikes left by the time Delta Company pushed through, set the seal on the performance.

Doubtless there are many tales within the companies that will go untold, at least in print, but on the whole most agree it was all worthwhile.



CSM Smith, CPL Schwefelger, PTE Lipson and PTE Gray during D Company reassembly



Sgt Braid and PTE Wyles of 1st Sect searching a POW's equipment.



The Church Service



PTE Noakes (patient) D Coy. CPL Finn (amputating) Medic



SGT Evans the IO and PTE Intilli with POW. Who says I can't shoot him?



LCPL Hirsch, B Coy.



The Battalion CP



107 BTY on the move.



The IO and his band of renowned spies.



PTE Grigg Spt Coy and PTE Tyson C Coy.



B Coy: LCPL Godfrey, PTE Hoffrichter, PTE Terbos and PTE Stumpy Payne.



'Pioneers at work'



With a little help from our "friends"



Kangaroo Hill airstrip unloading stores.



The Sigs — SGT Godfrey, SGT Gollege, PTE Hanson, PTE McGrath, LCPL Krenke.



SGT Gollage don't worry, it does work sometimes!



PTE Speedy Collins and PTE Burns of D Coy going halves on the water.



A distinct lack of personal cam by 2IC A Coy.



Mortarman PTE Mick Scheepers.



WO2 Diction and CPL Smallwood — the paper war is never won.